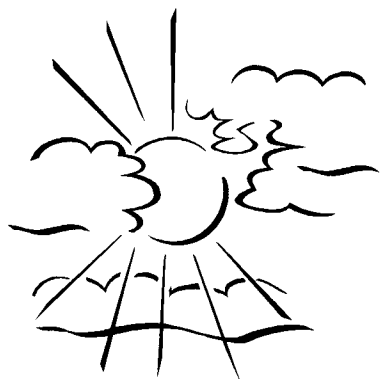


***Department  
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Human  
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# **Articles in Today's Clips**

## **Friday, March 31, 2006**

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# **Judge says jail tapings not in her jurisdiction Aquilina rescinds order to block Hollands' recordings**

By Chris Andrews and Kevin Grasha  
Lansing State Journal

Published March 31, 2006

Lansing District Judge Rosemarie Aquilina on Thursday rescinded her order to block the recording of phone conversations between Tim and Lisa Holland and their attorneys.

Aquilina withdrew the order during the preliminary hearing for the Hollands, charged with killing their 7-year-old son, Ricky.

Aquilina agreed with an attorney for Ingham County Sheriff Gene Wriggelsworth that she didn't have jurisdiction over jail operations.

Still, defense attorneys and the American Civil Liberties Union were troubled by the disclosure in court a day earlier that the practice of recording inmates' calls includes those to their lawyers.

"We haven't heard of jails taping what should be confidential conversations," said Kary Moss, president of the ACLU of Michigan. "That's wrong."

The sheriff's department began recording the calls when a new telephone system was installed in December, Chief Deputy Vicki Harrison said.

The automatic recording also applies to the intercomlike system that inmates use to talk with visitors. When attorneys visit, though, they meet with their clients in an area where their conversations are not recorded.

The jail, located in Mason, has about 600 inmates on a given day. Signs posted at the phones inform inmates of the recording policy, Harrison said, and the person on the receiving end hears a message that the call will be recorded.

"To use a phone is not a right in a jail," Wriggelsworth said. "It's a privilege."

He said recording conversations can be useful in cases such as an inmate harassing a witness or calling a spouse in violation of a restraining order.

While all phone conversations are recorded, Wriggelsworth said officials don't listen to a conversation once they determine it is with an attorney.

Aquilina said Wednesday that she was appalled by the practice of recording inmates' conversations with their attorneys.

To protect attorney-client privilege, she ordered that Lisa and Tim Holland be taken to nonmonitored telephones for conversations with their lawyers.

On Thursday, she agreed there is no privilege because both parties are made aware that their calls are monitored at the jail.

Hugh Clarke, a Lansing defense attorney, said he is aware that conversations might be monitored, and he avoids having telephone conversations with clients in jail.

Clarke said he finds the practice offensive.

"Those are privileged communications," he said. "You don't like the idea of any phone call being monitored or tape-recorded."

Staff writer Hugh Leach contributed to this report. Contact Chris Andrews at 377-1054 or [candrews@lsj.com](mailto:candrews@lsj.com). Contact Ke-vin Grasha at 267-1347 or [kgrasha@lsj.com](mailto:kgrasha@lsj.com).

# **Forensic scientist testifies about blood in Holland home**

By Kevin Grasha  
Lansing State Journal

Published March 31, 2006

MASON - Prosecutors' last scheduled witness took the stand Thursday as they closed in on resting their case in the preliminary hearing for Tim and Lisa Holland.

The Hollands face open murder charges in the death of their son Ricky.

Ann Gordon, a forensic scientist for the Michigan State Police, was cross-examined by defense attorneys and testified about blood evidence found in the Hollands' Williamston home and one of their vehicles.

She also described how, in January, she helped lift plastic bags containing Ricky's remains out of a few feet of water.

Gordon recounted several areas in the Hollands' home where she had tested for possible blood, including Ricky's bedroom door and a living room wall, where the blood appeared to be spattered.

The preliminary hearing, in its 13th day of testimony, will determine if the murder case against the couple advances to trial.

It will continue April 11. Gordon is expected to finish her testimony then.

Gordon also testified Thursday that several pieces of evidence have not yet been evaluated at a state police crime lab. That evidence includes torn shreds of a T-shirt found in a sealed bag that appear to be blood-stained.

Previous testimony revealed the T-shirt pieces were stashed in a backpack Lisa Holland tried to carry out of the Holland's home during a September search by authorities.

Contact Kevin Grasha at 267-1347 or [kgrasha@lsj.com](mailto:kgrasha@lsj.com).

Lansing State Journal

March 31, 2006

## **Request under review**

Attorney General Mike Cox still is reviewing a request made by two state representatives seeking confidential case files related to Ricky Holland.

Reps. David Law and Rick Baxter say the records could show how the system failed the 7-year-old Williamston boy, whose adoptive parents have been charged in his death.

"We're working on providing that," said Nate Bailey, a spokesman for the attorney general's office. "But there isn't a timeline when there will be a formal answer from this office."

# Police scientist asked about T-shirt

March 31, 2006

BY JACK KRESNAK  
FREE PRESS STAFF WRITER

MASON -- What could be a critical piece of evidence in the Ricky Holland murder case -- the torn remnants of an orange T-shirt with suspected bloodstains -- has not been analyzed yet, a Michigan State Police forensic scientist testified Thursday.

Although police found the shirt in a diaper bag at the Leroy Township home of Ricky's parents, Tim and Lisa Holland, nearly six months ago, the State Police crime lab has been flooded with evidence in the case and hasn't had time to confirm whether blood is on the shirt, said scientist Ann Gordon.

Her testimony capped 13 days of a preliminary examination of the Hollands in 55th District Court. Each is charged with murder in the death of 7-year-old Ricky and first-degree child abuse. The T-shirt and a single hair, apparently human, were found by police in a plastic Ziploc baggie inside a backpack-type diaper bag that Lisa Holland tried to leave when police came to search the couple's home Sept. 6, according to testimony.

Gordon spent most of Thursday testifying about suspected bloodstains found inside the Hollands' home and their two vehicles, as well as at a swampy area south of Dansville where the boy's skeletal remains were recovered.

Asked by defense attorneys when the lab's analysis would be finished, Gordon said, "That particular type of analysis would take me months and months and months to do."

Defense attorneys said they needed to review two videos and other documents before they can finish questioning Gordon. The judge then adjourned the preliminary examination until April 11.

Gordon was the 18th witness to testify, although one -- a pediatrician at the University of Michigan Hospital -- was withdrawn because Judge Rosemarie Aquilina ruled the doctor had been given too much information that was not admissible as evidence in the case.

Ingham County Assistant Prosecutor Mike Ferency said he plans to rest his case after Gordon completes her testimony.

Contact **JACK KRESNAK** at 313-223-4544 or [jkresnak@freepress.com](mailto:jkresnak@freepress.com).

# Missing girl may be with mother

FLINT

THE FLINT JOURNAL FIRST EDITION

Friday, March 31, 2006

By Kim Crawford

kcrawford@flintjournal.com • 810.766.6242

FLINT - A 7-year-old Flint girl who was being cared for by her grandmother disappeared this week, apparently picked up by her biological mother, Flint police said Thursday.

"We think the mother picked the girl up from school, but the mother doesn't have legal custody, the grandmother does," said Sgt. Henry Younger of the department's juvenile bureau.

The girl, Taskaari M. Johnson, was at Civic Park Elementary School, 1402 W. Dayton, on Tuesday when two women walked into the school and checked the girl out at 12:30 p.m. The women used false names or identities, Younger said.

Taskaari's grandmother, Alice Johnson, said she believes the girl's biological mother has the girl. Police identified the mother as Vanita M. Sanders, 27.

"I believe she's going to bring her back," Johnson said about Sanders.

But that has not yet happened, Younger said Thursday afternoon.

According to Younger, Taskaari was placed with her father after her mother went into a treatment program, but then her father was arrested and jailed. At that point, her father filled out forms for her grandmother, Johnson, to take temporary legal custody of the child.

The girl is described as 4 feet tall and 75 pounds. She is black, has black hair and brown eyes.

Anyone with information about Taskaari's whereabouts is asked to call Younger at (810) 237-6821 or the Flint police at (810) 237-6800.

# Scope of child porn case grows

Friday, March 31, 2006

By John Agar  
The Grand Rapids Press

ALLEGAN -- Police say 20,000 images of child pornography -- twice the number originally thought -- have turned up in an investigation of sexual assaults of children captured on digital cameras.

The alleged victims come from two families who lived together just outside Allegan. They complained of sexual assaults, beatings with paddles and being forced into a dark basement with the doors locked.

One of the children said she told her mother, but the adult took no action, authorities said in court records.

On Thursday, the suspects waived probable-cause hearings in Allegan County District Court. The suspects include a 26-year-old father of four and his 56-year-old father, a convicted sex offender. The other suspect, 73, is the great-grandfather of the other family.

The Press is not identifying the suspects now to avoid identifying the children, who have been placed in foster care.

Prosecutors are trying to terminate parental rights of both sets of parents.

Sheriff's Detective Chris Koster said the state police computer-crimes lab in Lansing recovered 62,000 images, with 18,000 to 20,000 believed to be images of the children.

Some of the images are duplicates, but the number has gone up since last week, when police documented 8,000 such photos, court records showed.

Investigators say the images were not posted on the Internet, but they could tell the images were accessed on computers.

Koster was glad the children did not have to testify Thursday. They told investigators they did not feel safe at home. Police believe that most, if not all, of the images -- described in court records as children performing various sex acts on one another as well as adults -- were from the two families.

"They don't know anything different," Koster said.

Police consider it one of the worst child pornography cases in southwest Michigan.

Court records and testimony suggest dysfunctional relationships in the home, where three generations of two families lived together.

Family Court records said the 26-year-old father "orchestrated" sexual acts among the children, while his father, convicted of second-degree sexual assault of a child in 1993, regularly slept with a girl from each family.

The victim of the 1993 incident lived in the house.

The other adult male who lives in the house has not been charged, and told The Press last week that he was unaware the children were being assaulted.

He is the biological father of one of his wife's three children. She testified last week that one of the biological fathers is wanted by police, "so he's running."

Of the other, she said: "He took me to New York to have a DNA test on TV."

Neither biological father has contact with the children.



Police were called in mid-February when a school official reported concerns. The children told police that the 26-year-old and his 56-year-old father would "do nasty things to them."

The children ranged in age from 9 months to 8 years. A 9-year-old alleged victim visited her father on weekends, but lives with her mother.

The 26-year-old is charged with first-degree sexual assault, attempted first-degree sexual assault and second-degree sexual assault.

His father faces 18 felonies, including sexual assault, child sexually abusive activity and using a computer to commit a crime. The 73-year-old is charged with child sexually abusive activity and using a computer to commit a crime.

# **Candlelight vigil raises awareness of child abuse**

Friday, March 31, 2006

The Grand Rapids Press

Kent County child advocates hope to raise awareness of child abuse and neglect cases through a campaign that kicked off Thursday with a candlelight vigil that attracted about 50 people to Rosa Parks Circle in Grand Rapids.

Case workers and local officials called for vigilance in protecting the young, citing 9,808 instances of suspected abuse and neglect in Kent County last year.

Four children died in Grand Rapids alone.

"(Abuse and neglect) are often underreported because people are reluctant to call when they hear or see something," Grand Rapids police Capt. Jeff Hertel said.

The solution doesn't begin with police investigations or removal of children from homes, advocates said. Intervention and attention to abuse and neglect are necessary, and caring foster parents are needed for youngsters taken into the custody of the courts.

# Young abuse victims need special care

Port Huron Times Herald Editorial

New center could ease ordeal of sexual-assault investigations

As always, the St. Clair County Child Abuse/Neglect Council is fighting for children. This time, the group is trying to spare children who fall victim to sexual assault from further harm.

The council hopes to establish a child-advocacy center in St. Clair County, and the facility would serve a vital purpose.

When children fall prey to sexual predators, the experience is traumatic. The ordeal however doesn't end there. Investigators must question the victims. When prosecutors, detectives, Department of Human Services workers and any others interview the children, their ordeal can be made even worse.

A child-advocacy center would reduce the pressure. One person would interview the victims, while all other investigators monitor the session through a one-way glass window or video monitors.

Specially trained to question child victims, the interviewer would wear an earpiece that would enable him or her to receive questions to ask from the other investigators.

Michigan has about 30 of these facilities, including the Macomb County Care House in Mount Clemens. With the cooperation of St. Clair County law enforcement agencies and the prosecutor's office and other appropriate groups, Sally Straffon, the council's director, hopes to create a county child-advocacy center.

The project still is in its infancy. Straffon isn't certain of the facility's cost, whether the center should be built or an existing building should be renovated. She did say state and federal grants could help finance the effort.

There is no reason to subject young victims to further trauma by repeatedly forcing them to relive their ordeal. A child-advocacy center's approach promises to obtain the information required with the least amount of discomfort.

"It would be a tremendous benefit to our community," Straffon said. "It's a much more humane approach."

We agree.

Originally published March 31, 2006

Ann Arbor News Letters

March 31, 2006

## **Abused children deserve care, attention**

With state funding for child abuse prevention being cut more and more, it's not even a case of "no money for where our mouth is" - there's never been much mouth for this issue in the first place. The secretiveness of abuse needs a strong, loud, pervasive and constant message to challenge it. We as a society have not come anywhere close to creating this challenge. And to our disgrace every day we get further and further away from it. Abused children are absolutely powerless. That's a fact we're not even making a pretense of caring about.

Mary A. Eldridge, Ann Arbor

# **Trickle of Medicare refunds hurts small pharmacies most**

## **Slow payments may push some out of business**

Sharon Terlep / The Detroit News

March 31, 2006

Frank Nofar has spent a generation dispensing pills and advice from behind the counter of his tiny Ypsilanti pharmacy.

But after nearly three decades running his one-man operation, Nofar can't say whether Frank's Drugs will still be in business six months from now.

He is among a growing number of small, community pharmacists who say they're in difficult financial straits because of the federal government's new Medicare drug benefit program.

Nofar says he's waited months to be reimbursed for some drugs and, when he does get paid, the amount often doesn't cover the cost of the medicine.

"They're choking us," Nofar said of the management companies that administer the federal drug benefit that became available Jan. 1. "I don't even know now who's paying me and who's not. I just hope that one day these people realize they're hurting all of us."

The management companies say they are running a more efficient system that's cutting down on overpayment to pharmacists and saving seniors an average of 35 percent on the drugs they buy.

"When you want to save money for seniors, that may mean smaller profits for drug stores," said Mark Merritt, president of the Pharmaceutical Care Management Association.

The group represents pharmacy benefit managers that administer about 80 percent of the nation's drug benefits, including many of the new Medicare plans.

More than 40 million people are eligible for the new Medicare prescription coverage and about 26 million have signed up.

Many patients now covered through Medicare previously paid cash for their medicines because they lacked insurance, or used Medicaid, the coverage system for the poor.

Medicaid payments were made by federal and state governments, while the Medicare plans put private companies in charge.

Pharmacists say Medicaid payments were timely and reliable. Under Medicare, however, insurance companies and pharmacy benefit managers can negotiate separate contracts with pharmacists.

Many of those contracts call for repayment just once a month, while Medicaid programs typically paid pharmacies every two weeks.

If druggists decline to accept such terms, they have to turn away customers who rely on Medicare to pay for their drugs.

Pharmacy benefit management companies "can pretty much offer a take-it or-leave-it contract and your average individual community pharmacist is not in a great bargaining position," said Carol Cook, spokeswoman for the National Community Pharmacists Association. "It's created a real cash-flow crunch for our people."

Cook said her association has heard from a handful of pharmacists who have gone out of business in part because of problems with Medicare plans. Nationwide, pharmacy groups report that their members are being forced to cut back, borrow from banks or consider closing.

The big chain pharmacies are able to deal with the changes because prescription sales account for a smaller portion of their business and they cater to fewer customers on Medicare and Medicaid, advocates for community pharmacists say.

Chains such as CVS Corp. and Walgreen Co. also have the financial backing to weather late or reduced payments.

But even retail pharmacy chains, especially small ones, are having problems with Medicare repayments, if not to the extent of independent pharmacists, said Mary Ann Wagner, senior vice president of pharmacy policy and regional affairs for the National Association of Chain Drugstores.

Medicare isn't solely responsible for the woes of community pharmacists, who have been struggling for years because of increased costs, competition from major chains and cutbacks in Medicaid funding.

But for many, Medicare-related pressures might be the last gasp.

"We're into March and people are telling us they haven't been paid yet from January," said Crystal Wright, spokeswoman for the Association of Community Pharmacists Congressional Network, a group that advocates for independent pharmacists. "A situation is occurring where pharmacies are running their business at a financial loss."

Merritt, of the Pharmaceutical Care Management Association, said that what may be a loss for pharmacies is a gain for seniors, many of whom have never had a benefit plan to cover their medications.

Under the Medicaid system, pharmacies were being overpaid as much as 50 percent through largely inefficient systems run by states and the federal government, he said.

Private companies are eliminating those overpayments and creating a more efficient system that saves patients money.

Merritt acknowledges that some pharmacists are months behind in receiving payments, but he attributes that to glitches in the drug plan's rollout.

"People are saving money with this system," Merritt said. "The reality is that first and foremost you've got to take care of seniors and that's what we're doing."

But Nofar fears that his customers may lose out in the long run. He says he runs his store on a shoestring budget that allows him to offer drugs cheaper than the major chains. Some of the city's poorest residents, he says, go to him for their medication.

"I don't know how long I can stay here," Nofar said. "I just keep plugging on day-by-day."

*You can reach Sharon Terlep at (313)223-4686 or [sterlep@detnews.com](mailto:sterlep@detnews.com).*

# Medicare bus brings drug-plan assistance to Burnham Brook

Anthony Martinez Beven  
*The Battle Creek Enquirer*

The crowd was steady on Thursday as older adults sought better understanding of the newly revamped Medicare Part D drug plans at Burnham Brook.

That's where representatives from the Medicare Rx Express bus tour were on hand to provide seniors with guidance and direction.

Outside Burnham Brook's Valentine Conference Room, where the informational session for seniors was held, Donna Thiessen, 72, patiently waited with her husband, Chet Thiessen, 73.

They were looking for drug-plan enrollment assistance. Thiessen said she and her husband are "both on major pills," and they can barely afford the cost of medications. And to add to the stress, Thiessen said the recent Medicare insurance plan shake-up has been complicated.

"I just don't understand what we're supposed to go about to get this started for us," Thiessen said. She said she glad to have access to the Medicare bus services, offered by the federal Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS).

Brenda Delgado, head of the Medicare bus tour for the Midwest, said CMS staff, volunteers with the Michigan Medicare/Medicaid Assistance Program and other groups were there to help seniors evaluate and compare the different drug plans.

Working with a counselor from the My Medicare Matters, a coalition sponsored by the National Council on Aging, Pat Cox received information on her Medicare eligibility.

Like the Thiessens, Cox said her primary concern was prescriptions.

"I have other insurance, and I don't know if I want to keep that or go with the lower cost," of a Medicare insurance plan, Cox said.

Cox said she was sure she would have the information she needed to make the necessary decisions relating to her health care before she left.

The Medicare Part D prescription plans will cover brand name and generic drugs, according to the CMS.

"If you wanna enroll in a Medicare drug plan this year, you have to do it by May 15, otherwise enrollment ends and won't be available until next year — November 15 through December 31 for effective date January 2007," said Delgado, as a flurry of questions and answers echoed throughout the room.

Delgado said she expected 75 Battle Creek seniors to stop by Burnham Brook before it moved on to the next stop in Detroit. Next week, she said, the bus will finish its tour in Michigan and Ohio.

She added that "at least half of those that come in today actually enroll in a plan. That's very different when we were doing these three months ago, about 25 percent were enrolling."

Searching one of the portable computer laptops for the best drug plan that would fit the needs of Helen Morris, Delgado discovered that the 79-year-old, who is living on a fixed income, now pays about \$430 a month for her five prescriptions.

"When I have to pay rent — \$573 a month — plus my utilities, I don't have the money for my medications," Morris said.

By Saturday, Morris will be enrolled in a drug plan where she will be paying between \$12 and \$15 a month for drugs.

Delgado said the drug plans, on average, are going to cover 75 percent of prescription cost for seniors. And she said some plans have a zero deductible, while others have a low deductible.

Marlene Prather, 60, had already enrolled in a drug plan, but she said she was told by her social worker to go over the specifics of the plan with a CMS counselor.

Prather did just that.

"As I'm sitting here, I found out that I am signed up for the best plan" for me, she said. "I was checking to make sure, because you have one time to change before May."

Prather said her plan will cut a lot of out-of-pocket cost. In addition, she said, the plan provides a membership to the YMCA.

"We all need exercise. It can help with arthritis, cholesterol, blood pressure, diabetes," Prather said. "You need to have some forms of exercise if you're able."

*Anthony Martinez Beven covers health and features. He can be reached at 966-0684 or [abeven@battlecr.gannett.com](mailto:abeven@battlecr.gannett.com).*

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Detroit News Letters

Friday, March 31, 2006

## **Poor can get medicine when unable to pay**

Although a March 17 article was accurate and made an effort to present a fair picture of the ruling by the federal court in a case in which I have represented the plaintiffs, the headline, "Poor can skip their co-pays," misrepresented the ruling.

A more accurate headline would have been, "Poor can get their prescriptions filled when unable to pay." The ruling protects Medicaid recipients from having to go without the medicines their physicians have prescribed because of their inability to pay the Medicaid co-payments.

The court's ruling should not be portrayed as an invitation for Medicaid recipients to "skip their co-pays." The pharmacist quoted in the article correctly noted that most Medicaid recipients find a way to pay their co-payments, and they will continue to do so.

But now, as a result of the ruling, recipients who did not get their prescriptions filled because they did not have the funds to pay their co-payments will be able to take their prescribed medications as their doctors direct.

*Jacqueline Doig*  
*Senior Staff Attorney*  
*Center for Civil Justice*  
*Saginaw*

# **Senior manager promoted to head Highfields Greg Pincumbe named interim CEO, president**

By Matthew Miller  
Lansing State Journal

Published March 31, 2006

Highfields Inc. has appointed longtime senior manager Greg Pincumbe as interim president and chief executive officer.

The social service agency's Board of Trustees dismissed former President and CEO Jim Hines on Monday, a decision Chairman Charles Corley said was part of an effort to correct problems that forced the agency to suspend its residential treatment program for juvenile offenders last month.

The state Department of Human Services has cited Highfields for use of "excessive physical restraint" by staff members and for failure to prevent or to report a hazing incident. The department also has recommended disciplinary action that could include revocation of Highfields' license.

Corley said Pincumbe was selected because "he's an experienced, qualified individual with strong leadership skills; he doesn't mind working as the interim, and that works."

Pincumbe said his goal would be "to help Highfields restore its residential program and continue the good work we're doing in 13 or 14 other programs."

Contact Matthew Miller at 377-1046 or [mrmiller@lsj.com](mailto:mrmiller@lsj.com).

## Teen in court in death of fetus

### He's slow to meet probation terms

March 31, 2006

BY JOHN MASSON  
FREE PRESS STAFF WRITER

The Richmond Township teenager who tried to end his girlfriend's pregnancy with a souvenir baseball bat was nearly sent to the Macomb County Juvenile Justice Center at a scheduled probation hearing Thursday.

A county juvenile official recommended that the teen be sent to the JJC because he had effectively dropped out of school and was slow to perform the 200 hours of community service to which he was sentenced in September.

"You should have more done than you have done, right now," Judge Matthew Switalski told the youth. "I'm not going to detain you today, but the first day of school you miss, you're gone." Instead, Switalski ordered the teen back to class as of today, at whatever school he can find to take him. The judge also said he will add a second place for the boy to perform community service so he can do it closer to home.

The youth, who isn't being named by the Free Press because he was charged as a juvenile, pleaded no contest in August to "intentional conduct against a pregnant individual resulting in miscarriage or stillbirth," a rarely used felony that could have resulted in a term of up to 15 years in prison if he'd been charged and convicted as an adult.

He admitted striking his then-girlfriend in the abdomen repeatedly with the miniature bat, at her suggestion, because they did not believe they could get an abortion without her parents' approval. The girl, now 18, was not charged in connection with the incident. She was in court Thursday with her mother but left without speaking.

He was 17 when he was sentenced in September to about 1 1/2 years of probation and 200 hours of community service at the Compassion Pregnancy Center in Clinton Township.

At Thursday's hearing, Switalski was told the youth has dropped out of Armada High School and has only performed 15 hours of his required community service. A county official recommended that the teen be sent to the JJC, where he would have to attend school.

The teenager's attorney, Miranda Massie, said her client left Armada High School because of issues surrounding his case. He was trying to enroll in Enterprise High School in Romeo, a four-nights-per-week alternative high school, but Massie said they couldn't accept him because it's the middle of a semester.

Massie added that her client had trouble getting to the Compassion Pregnancy Center in because it's a long way from his home.

"It's about 40 minutes away from where he lives, and they're only open until 5 on weekdays," Massie said.

Switalski modified the boy's sentence to require 25 hours of community service every month. He also ordered the high school junior to undergo counseling.

Macomb County Prosecutor Eric Smith didn't return a phone call seeking comment.

The youth is due back in court June 29 for another review hearing.

Contact **JOHN MASSON** at 586-469-4904 or [masson@freepress.com](mailto:masson@freepress.com).

# **Girl sets bomb off at school**

## **Lexington teen faces three felony charges; 2nd bomb found in locker**

By ANGELA MULLINS  
Port Huron Times Herald

**LEXINGTON TWP.-** A 13-year-old Lexington girl has been charged with three felonies after police said she detonated a homemade pop-bottle bomb outside Croswell-Lexington Middle School.

No one was injured in the incident that happened about 8:20 a.m. Thursday on the school's playground. The bomb was made up of chemicals placed in a plastic bottle. Police are not releasing the girl's name.

Students began school at their scheduled time - 8:30 a.m. - after police and school officials did a sweep of the building and surrounding property, Croswell Police Chief Dave Hall said.

During the sweep, Hall said a second bomb, made in the same way as the first, was found inside the girl's locker.

The incident remains under investigation. No other details were available Thursday.

All students were removed from the playground area while the sweep was under way.

Letters were sent home Thursday with students detailing the incident for parents.

The teen charged with the explosion is expected to be treated as a juvenile. She's been turned over to the Sanilac County Probate Court's juvenile division.

If convicted as a juvenile, the eighth-grader faces a maximum penalty of being sent to a detention center until her 20th birthday.

In October, a freshman detonated a bottle bomb at Capac High School. No one was hurt.

*Contact Angela Mullins at (810) 989-6270 or [amullins@gannett.com](mailto:amullins@gannett.com).*

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Michigan Report

March 30, 2006

## **ADVOCATES ASK FOR JUVENILE EXEMPTION FOR SEX OFFENDER REGISTRY**

Juveniles who commit sexual misconduct should have a judge decide whether they should be placed on the state's sex offender registry or at least have a process available so that their case can be reviewed later on a group of advocates told a House Judiciary subcommittee examining the state's act on Thursday.

Vicki Seidl, an assistant prosecuting attorney for the Kent County Juvenile Division, told the panel that while a minor might have violated the law, in most instances it does not mean that they will be a risk to society for the remainder of their lives. But putting a juvenile on the registry automatically assigns them that fate in the eyes of others, she said.

Ms. Seidl said also that judges in charge of these minor criminal sexual misconduct cases should be the ones deciding whether they are placed on the registry.

Dennis Jacobs, a clinical psychologist, said that there is no research that has shown that a sex offender registry decreases the number of sexual misconduct violations and for juveniles to be on the list it promotes behavioral issues like suicide because the person often times is disassociated from others. More treatment options should be in place for juvenile offenders, he said, so children can be rehabilitated.

But Rep. David Law (R-Commerce Twp.), who sponsored legislation requiring lifetime tether monitoring for sex offenders over the age of 17 who victimize a person under the age of 13, questioned whether some sex offenders show a pattern of misconduct beginning at childhood and therefore should be on the registry.

Mr. Jacobs said estimated that 99 percent of the children he has treated have been successful in their rehabilitation. "You're talking about a very extreme case."

However, Mr. Law then said, "I am talking about an extreme case, and it does happen, and it sickens me when it does."

Though the panel also heard testimony from Leah DuBuc, who pled guilty to sexual misconduct at the age of 11 to escape living at home with an abusive stepmother who had accused her of the misconduct as she and her stepsiblings were playing a game of house.

Now 10 years later, Ms. DuBuc said she has gone through the proper treatments and is an honor roll student at Western Michigan University, but being on the registry has caused her to lose jobs, internships and friends.

“The registry is holding back our dreams,” she said. “Let those cases be reviewed.”

# Mother in fight to regain children

Friday, March 31, 2006

By Theresa D. McClellan  
TheGrand Rapids Press

GRAND RAPIDS -- She lives in a safe house now, receives mental-health counseling and has a support group in her corner.

But that might not be enough to reunite Marina Ivanova with her two young children.

The Ukraine native was convicted of child abuse after police in September 2004 removed her children, then ages 3 and 23 months, from an allegedly feces- and trash-filled home at Eastbrook Apartments in Grand Rapids.

Witnesses reported the children were left alone in urine-soaked beds.

Ivanova's lawyer, Judith Raskiewicz, said her client acknowledged her home was out of control but said it was because she was in the midst of moving when police came there because of reports of a crying child.

Ivanova's problem stemmed from many factors, including being isolated in a foreign country and her compulsive disorder to not throw away anything, her attorney said.

After spending 11 months in jail, she also received counseling, completed parenting classes and followed orders that could reunite her with her children, her attorney said. The children now are wards of the court.

Raskiewicz is one of four attorneys who appeared Thursday before Kent County Circuit Judge G. Patrick Hillary in the court battle for the children.

It is a lengthy process that allows all four lawyers to cross-examine each witness. Three more witnesses are expected in the hearing to terminate both parents' rights, which will resume April 17.

The case has captured the attention of supporters from the Heartside community and Families for Justice and Equality, a local court watchdog group that has started challenging family court cases where rights are terminated.

Bishop Walter Durham of the justice and equality group argued outside the courtroom that the courts have no say in ending Ivanova's parental rights since she is Ukrainian and not a U.S. citizen. She gained full custody of her children in an earlier divorce proceeding. The children, now 3 and 5, have dual citizenship.

The children's father, James Warner, and his lawyer, Freeman Haehnel, challenged statements in court about Warner's alleged abuse of Ivanova and said they have followed orders of Bethany Christian Services, which has the children in foster care.

Case worker Julie Kammeraad testified neither parent is fit to have the children because Warner could not hold a job for any length of time and made no effort to see the children when he had the chance.

Haehnel challenged the case worker for questioning Warner's choice to quit a job at a McDonald's restaurant for a manufacturing job.

"So you mean to say if he'd kept his job at McDonald's, we wouldn't be in this courtroom?" scoffed Haehnel.

Kammeraad also stated Ivanova currently has no job or permanent place to live.

"I just want my children. This makes me sick," Ivanova said.

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**March 30, 2006**

## **First Gentleman Hosts First Mentor Michigan Leadership Council Meeting**

LANSING – The recently established Mentor Michigan Leadership Council has partnered with Detroit's College for Creative Studies to develop a series of public service announcements (PSAs) to be shown throughout the state. The PSAs, which supplement the mentor recruitment efforts of Mentor Michigan, will begin airing in May 2006.

The service announcements were taped during the council's first meeting, hosted earlier this month by First Gentleman Daniel G. Mulhern. Mulhern spoke about the importance of the council's advisory role to Governor Jennifer M. Granholm and its work to provide information to the citizens of Michigan about the impact a caring adult can make in the life of a child.

"The most successful people in the world will tell you that they've had a great mentor who taught them how to be the person they are today," Mulhern said. "This meeting is the first step in the ultimate goal of making sure every child in Michigan has at least one adult who cares about their well-being and encourages that child to go on to college and dream big dreams."

The council has already started working to recruit more adults to mentor; raise awareness about the importance of mentoring; promote quality standards for mentoring programs; and speak on behalf of mentors, mentoring organizations, and the expansion of mentoring in Michigan.

The Mentor Michigan Leadership Council was created by Granholm to support and promote mentoring efforts in the state and to educate citizens on the benefits gained for everyone involved in mentoring. Council members are:

**Kip S. Bohne** of Holt, marketing and promotion manager for WSYM TV FOX 47.

**Joseph P. Crawford** of Grand Rapids, editorial page editor for the Grand Rapids Press.

**James J. Dreyer** of Byron Center, president of Event Marketing Enterprises, Inc.

**Michael D. Fezzey** of Farmington, president and general manager of WJR Radio.

**Randolph K. Flechsig** of Ada, president of Davenport University.

**Linda Gillum** of Bloomfield Hills, adjunct faculty member at the University of Michigan Medical School.

**Joyce V. Hayes-Giles** of Detroit, senior vice president of customer service for DTE Energy.

**Smallwood Holoman** of Midland, manager of Dow Promise with Dow Chemical Company.

**Denise Ilitch** of Bingham Farms, president of Illitch Enterprises, Inc.

**Harry J. Knopke** of Grand Rapids, president of Aquinas College.

**John S. Lore** of Bay City, senior vice president of Detroit Medical Center

**Daniel J. Piepszowski** of Detroit, vice president of programs for New Detroit, Inc.

**Patricia A. Ryan O'Day** of Marquette, president and owner of Marquette Monthly.

**Geneva J. Williams** of Detroit, president and CEO of City Connect Detroit.

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*MIRS*  
*March 30, 2006*

## **Jobless Rates Up In 16 of 17 State Regions**

Seasonally adjusted jobless rates in Michigan increased in 16 of the state's 17 major labor market areas, according to figures released today by the Department of Labor and Economic Growth (DLEG).

"Most of the observed shifts in Michigan's regional labor markets were seasonal in nature, with moderate February unemployment rate increases in several areas," said Rick **WACLAWEK**, director of the Bureau of Labor Market Information & Strategic Initiatives.

For February, the only area to see a decrease in jobless rates was the Detroit-Warren-Livonia metropolitan statistical area. In that region, the unemployment rate fell from 7.6 percent in January to seven percent in February.

The jobless rate increases between January and February ranged from 0.2 of a percentage point to 1.1 percentage points, with an average advance of 0.6 percent. The most pronounced increase occurred in the Northeast Lower Michigan Region, the Flint Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) and the Upper Peninsula.

The mildest increases took place in the Monroe and Ann Arbor markets.

# Minimum wage up! The GOP capitulates

Friday, March 31, 2006

Jackson Citizen Patriot Editorial

We've expressed our concerns with proposals to raise Michigan's minimum wage above the federal minimum. Well, the foul deed is done. The governor and her Democratic colleagues in the Legislature are rejoicing over a rare victory on public policy, which they believe will make Michigan a better place for workers and families.

And Republicans -- what are they doing? They actually engineered this change, betraying their belief that raising the minimum wage will raise the cost of doing business in Michigan. The governor was only too happy to sign a huge minimum-wage increase into law.

In fact, the only consolation for GOP flip-floppers is this: Their action produced its intended effect. Organizers withdrew the Democratic-backed petition drive to put a minimum-wage increase on the Michigan ballot next fall.

Yes, the only object of Republicans consenting to raise Michigan's minimum wage from \$5.15 to \$6.95 per hour on Oct. 1 was to prevent something worse from happening. The wage will rise to \$7.15 per hour on July 1, 2007, and to \$7.40 per hour on July 1, 2008.

Let's consider that fuzzy logic.

The certainty that the ballot proposal qualified as a "greater evil" was based on public opinion surveys. Had the Democrats' minimum-wage plan made it to the ballot, the surveys suggested, it would have passed. In other words, the GOP used a strategy it often bashes Democrats for using. It put the proverbial finger to the wind to see which way public sentiment was blowing. A major public policy was set by prevailing winds.

It may be that most voters would lean toward supporting a minimum-wage ballot issue. But suppose a vigorous counter-campaign had informed them that this increase would have consequences? Would they vote for the ballot issue if the increase were likely to lead to fewer jobs and to small businesses being forced to shut their doors? Would they have voted for it if they understood the cumulative impact on the state economy of annual inflationary indexing of the minimum? Perhaps so. But we won't know, for Republicans were unwilling to take that chance. Instead, they abandoned their principles without a fight.

Finally, how much appreciation does this Republican strategy get from the business community? Are business leaders going to go to the mat for Republican candidates because "things might have been worse?" Of course not. The minimum-wage increases will ratchet up the cost of doing business in Michigan. The increase will not be dollar for dollar, for not all businesses pay the minimum wage. Yet many who don't pay the wage will be affected by such a large increase. If you raise the baseline in wages by governmental edict, it has an inflationary, rippling impact upward.

If a local employer pays a starting wage of \$8 an hour, that is in relationship to a \$5.15 minimum wage. But what if the minimum is \$7.40 an hour? To preserve the same wage gap, the manufacturer must raise his starting wage to \$10.85 an hour. How does he minimize the impact on his payroll costs -- by hiring fewer people, by speeding up his investment in automation, by raising the price of his product, by eliminating benefit packages?

Ironically, Republicans want to cut taxes, but taxes are merely one cost of doing business. They pale in comparison to wage costs. So, indeed, what were Republicans thinking?

--The Jackson Citizen Patriot

# Michigan on some troublesome lists

Friday, March 31, 2006

From the Houghton Daily Mining Gazette

Michigan has been showing up on some top 10 lists lately, but they are nothing to celebrate. Last year, Michigan was one of the top states for people to leave and was one of the costliest in terms of legislative spending including salaries for our senators and representatives of nearly \$80,000 a year, among the highest in the nation. Michigan is also just one of five states that requires poor families to pay income taxes. Something seems grossly out of sync in terms of Michigan's priorities when legislators of one of most financially-troubled states in the nation are so well-paid while the poorest citizens they were elected to serve end up serving them.

The Center on Budget and Policy Priorities recently released a report that listed Michigan as one of five states that requires a family of four making less \$14,000 to pay taxes. Michigan is also one of seven states that taxes families of three or four earning less than three quarters of the poverty line. The other six states are Alabama, Hawaii, Indiana, Louisiana, Montana and West Virginia.

The state's 3.9 percent income tax may not seem like much of a burden, but to a family surviving on a minimum wage, that couple hundred dollars a year would go a long way toward buying food, clothing or utilities.

The federal government offers the poor a valuable tool called the earned income tax credit. The credit is geared toward working poor families with children and can add thousands of dollars to their annual income by substantially reducing or, in some cases, eliminating their federal tax liability. Unfortunately, a third of poor Michigan families failed to take advantage of the credit in 2003.

A similar state tax credit measure has been proposed in Michigan many times but has gone nowhere. The state has increased the personal exemption over the years, which has helped both wealthy and poor families but doesn't go far enough for the latter. Thankfully, that may soon change.

A Republican-sponsored bill in the House would allow low-income worker a state earned income tax credit equal to 10 percent of her federal earned income tax credit. A Democratic bill in the Senate seeks a 25 percent credit. Both bills would cost the already cash-strapped state treasury, but we suspect our highly-paid lawmakers will find a way to ease the burden of taxes on Michigan's working poor.

After all, a very wise man once said: "To whom much is given, much is expected."



JENNIFER M. GRANHOLM  
GOVERNOR

STATE OF MICHIGAN  
MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES  
LANSING



MARIANNE UDOW  
DIRECTOR

## News Release

Contact: Stepheni Schlinker or Maureen Sorbet (517) 373-7394

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### April is Sexual Assault Awareness Month

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March 31, 2006

LANSING – Governor Jennifer M. Granholm has declared April 2006 Sexual Assault Awareness Month in Michigan.

"Sexual assault is primarily a crime of power and control," Marianne Udow, director of the Michigan Department of Human Services, said. "It can impact all people regardless of age, ethnicity, race, gender, ability or economic status. That is why it is critically important to intensify public awareness of sexual assault, to educate people about the need for citizen involvement in efforts to reduce sexual violence and to increase support for agencies providing sexual assault services."

During April, Michigan Domestic Violence Prevention and Treatment Board executive director Debi Cain encourages Michigan residents to talk about this issue with friends, family and colleagues and to take action to stop this horrific crime.

"Sexual assault is a pervasive problem in Michigan and the United States," Cain said. "Recent studies provide compelling evidence to indicate the scope of this issue. The Survey of Violence in the Lives of Michigan Women, conducted by the Michigan Department of Community Health said 40 percent of women in Michigan have experienced some form of sexual violence, ranging from unwanted touching to forcible rape, since the age of 16."

The Michigan Domestic Violence Prevention and Treatment Board is a legislatively-enacted and governor-appointed body charged with implementing efforts to eliminate domestic and sexual violence in this state. The board is administratively housed within the Michigan Department of Human Services.

During Sexual Assault Awareness Month, domestic violence board-funded sexual assault agencies throughout the state will offer a variety of events. Please contact your local sexual assault services agency to find out more information about events scheduled in your area.

For more information about the Michigan Domestic Violence Treatment and Prevention Board, visit the DHS Web site at [www.michigan.gov/domesticviolence](http://www.michigan.gov/domesticviolence)

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JENNIFER M. GRANHOLM  
GOVERNOR

STATE OF MICHIGAN  
MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES  
LANSING



MARIANNE UDOW  
DIRECTOR

## News Release

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### **DHS to close Wayne County Lincoln Park District Office April 21; services to be merged with Fort Wayne District in Detroit April 24**

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**March 31, 2006**

DETROIT – Michigan Department of Human Services will close its Wayne County district office in Lincoln Park at the close of business on Friday, April 21. Cases served through that office will be reassigned to the Fort Wayne District Office, located at 6534 W. Jefferson in Detroit, effective Monday, April 24.

DHS director Marianne Udow made the announcement today

"This consolidation addresses budget realities and allows the department to maintain client service at an acceptable level," Udow said. "There will be no staff layoffs because of the office consolidation."

Prior to the office closure, Lincoln Park clients will receive letters telling them where their case has been reassigned and the address and phone number of their DHS specialist. In most cases clients will continue to have the same caseworker.

In January the Fort Wayne District Office managed cases for 14,434 recipients of Family Independence Program, Food Assistance, State Emergency Relief, State Disability Assistance and Energy Assistance programs. There were almost 28,000 Medicaid clients served through the office in January. Neither the Lincoln Park nor Fort Wayne Districts provide children's protective services, adoption, foster care or related adult services.

Data published by Michigan Department of Human Services indicates Wayne County DHS served 355,011 clients in the five assistance programs and 425,415 Medicaid clients in January.

For more information go to [www.michigan.gov/dhs](http://www.michigan.gov/dhs)